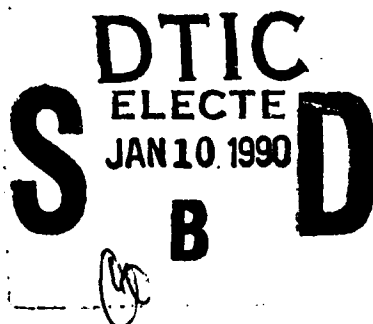


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SOVIET FORCE STRUCTURE  
IN AN ERA OF REFORM



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SOVIET FORCE STRUCTURE IN AN ERA OF REFORM

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Revised edition  
March, 1989

The views expressed here are those of the  
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## SOVIET FORCE STRUCTURE IN AN ERA OF REFORM

### Roots of Change

The Soviets have continuously restructured and reequipped their forces to match the current state of Soviet military doctrine, military science, military art, potential areas of military operations, and prospective enemies. The process is evolutionary yet dynamic, and while smaller changes occur constantly, at times major restructuring reforms have occurred to accommodate major changes in the military environment. The central issue today is the extent to which future restructuring will respond to military requirements along with political and economic necessity.

During the Second World War the Soviets developed a highly articulated force structure suited to operate in an immense theater of war against a well-trained, though smaller, enemy force which possessed an armored nucleus. The bulk of the Soviet force structure (ninety percent) consisted of rifle (combined arms) armies subdivided into corps and divisions and reinforced by sufficient combat elements (artillery, armor, and engineers) to lend resilience in defense and limited sustainability on offense. The mobile offensive force of the Red Army was the thirty-five tank and mechanized corps, operating separately in support of rifle armies or organized collectively into ultimately six tank armies in support of Soviet fronts. These corps (of reinforced division size) and tank armies performed the dual

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function of launching counterattacks on the defense and conducting deep operations on the offense. The number of these mobile corps and their relative effectiveness determined the degree of success the Red Army achieved both on the defense and on the offense.

The Soviet mobile corps and their subordinate tank, mechanized, and motorized rifle brigades were characterized by their maneuverability, heavy firepower, flexibility, and relative durability. They were functional formations tailored to perform tactical and operational maneuver both on the defense and on the offense. Their operational successes made them the model for mobile formations in the postwar Soviet Army.

Since 1945 the Soviets have conducted four major reforms of their force structure. Immediately after the war, in the midst of demobilization, the Soviets reorganized their ground force structure to create a new army capable of conducting war as required by new political realities and in the environment of central Europe. Combat experience late in the war clearly indicated that the force structure had been too tank-heavy, and lacked the combined arms balance necessary to fight successfully in the more heavily forested, urbanized, and hilly central European region. Postwar restructuring remedied these shortcomings while preserving the basic operational and tactical techniques which had produced victory in 1945.

During 1946 the Soviets converted their tank armies, tank

corps, and mechanized corps into mechanized armies, tank divisions, and mechanized divisions. The new armies and divisions were better balanced combined arms entities which incorporated into unit TOEs subunits which had been routinely attached in 1945.<sup>1</sup>

Postwar restructuring created forces which could carry out those important combat functions which had proved so critical in achieving victory in the war. The new mechanized armies, operating singly or in pairs, served as front mobile groups to exploit offensive success into the operational depth. The new separate tank and mechanized divisions performed the same function for armies. Mechanized divisions assigned to rifle corps served a dual purpose: either as reinforced forward detachments or as mobile forces to complete the tactical penetration and initiate exploitation into the operational depths.<sup>2</sup> The new structure also had a defensive dimension required in the face of initial Western atomic monopoly. The combined arms armies organized defenses in depth while mechanized armies functioned as well-balanced counterattack forces. GSFG deployment reflected this pattern.<sup>3</sup>

After Stalin's death in 1953, (between 1956 and 1958) the Soviet High Command again restructured ground forces, mechanizing and motorizing all elements of the force and tailoring them to fight and survive in an atomic environment. The Soviets replaced their large mechanized armies and mechanized and rifle divisions with smaller tank armies and motorized rifle

divisions.<sup>4</sup> The new force was more mobile, less vulnerable to atomic attack than the more ponderous mechanized forces had been, but was still sufficiently strong in infantry, tanks, and artillery to engage in intense conventional combat.

Basic operational and tactical combat techniques did not change significantly after 1956. The new tank armies served as front exploitation forces, and the refurbished tank divisions performed the same function at army level. Because all forces were now mobile, the Soviets ceased using the term "mobile group." While tank armies and tank divisions conducted operational maneuver, forward detachments conducted tactical maneuver for tank forces, combined arms armies, and motorized rifle divisions during penetration operations against hasty defenses, and during the exploitation and pursuit phases of operations.<sup>5</sup>

A major shift in Soviet military doctrine occurred after 1960, when Premier N. S. Khrushchev declared that a revolution had taken place in military affairs. Marshal V. D. Sokolovsky's 1962 work Voennaya Strategiya [Military strategy] summed up the change: "On the battlefield the decisive role will be played by the fires of nuclear weapons, the other means of armed conflict will utilize the nuclear attack for the final defeat of the enemy."<sup>6</sup> Soviet acceptance of the notion that future war would inevitably be nuclear had a serious effect on traditional Soviet views regarding operations and the Soviet Army force structure. Strategic matters, and the newly created Strategic Rocket

Forces, eclipsed traditional concerns for operational art and the role of ground forces in conducting tactical maneuver.

Rocket-nuclear forces were now "the main means of destroying operational large units of all types of enemy forces."

After 1961, the Soviets tailored their force structure to operate in the "single option" of nuclear war. Tank armies, combined arms armies, and motorized rifle divisions were lightened in manpower and weaponry, and tank armies and tank divisions became more tank-pure on the assumption that armored forces could best survive on the nuclear battlefield.<sup>7</sup>

Simultaneously with Khrushchev's ouster from power in 1964, evidence began appearing which reflected the Soviet military's discomfort with these recent radical doctrinal shifts. Although probably not altogether happy with the reduced stature of the ground forces, military theorists had temporarily accepted the revolution in military affairs as long as the United States retained clear nuclear superiority. As that superiority began to wane, however, and the U.S. itself shifted from the strategy of massive retaliation to flexible response, a Soviet return to the conventional option became, at first, a faint hope.

The transformation in Soviet military thought from a hope to a renewed conviction that war could be kept conventional took many years to mature fully. Transformation first required that the Soviets match U.S. nuclear capabilities at each level (strategic, theater, and tactical) and then, as the world wearied of the specter of nuclear war, changing political



conditions could pave the way for reduction of nuclear arms, and perhaps, ultimately, their partial or full abolition. These developments could return warfare to the conventional realm where the Soviets were far more capable and, hence, more comfortable. The Soviets realized this process might require years, perhaps even decades. Meanwhile, they sought to fashion strategic, operational, and tactical combat techniques which would make any opponent's decision to use nuclear weapons more difficult. Foremost among these techniques was the concept of anti-nuclear maneuver, which took the form of reemphasized operational maneuver, and to a lesser extent, tactical maneuver.<sup>8</sup> In addition, Soviet planning stressed the early destruction of enemy nuclear delivery means by conventional weaponry.

Soviet ground force strength and composition reflected Soviet warfighting concepts. Within the expanding ground forces, formations and units grew in size and, although still armor-heavy, the force structure came to reflect the combined arms balance so necessary to succeed in conventional operations. Tank armies and divisions received new complements of mechanized infantry; all divisions grew in manpower, tank, and artillery strength, and mobility. The logistical structure was streamlined to better support sustained deep conventional operations.<sup>9</sup>

As early as 1972 Soviet theorists noted the basic requirement for a more carefully articulated force structure to implement these maneuver concepts. V.Ye. Savkin wrote "The

difference in composition of troops operating on the axes of the main attack and on other axes probably will be less sharply expressed than was formerly the case. The main troop groupings will be distinguished more in the qualitative sense than in numbers."<sup>10</sup> Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s the Soviets carefully analyzed contemporary warfare (Vietnam, 1973 Israeli-Arab War, the Falklands War, and the war in Lebanon) and noted the impact of new weaponry on combat (for example, helicopters and ATGMs). Through a series of major exercises (Dnepr - 1967, Dvina - 1970, Yug - 1971 and others) the Soviets tested concepts, forces, and new equipment mixes.

Reflecting that experimentation, the Soviets fielded a broad array of new weaponry to match the requirements of the times (ATGMs, armored vehicles, tanks, self propelled artillery, mobile bridging, etc.). A variety of supporting functional units evolved to meet the same new combat demands. Ultimately, air assault battalions and brigades provided a new vertical dimension to both operational and tactical maneuver (these forces may already be supplemented by air assault units at division level and, in the future, may be supplemented by larger, more capable divisional-size air assault corps). Reconnaissance-diversionary [SPETSNAZ] brigades added a new dimension to deep operations by further threatening the security of a potential enemy's rear area. In many respects these units represented an attempt to replicate the extensive partisan and diversionary operations of the Second World War, which by 1944 had materially

assisted operations by operational maneuver forces. Creation of assault helicopter formations as flying artillery or tanks assisted more traditional aviation units in providing necessary air support for deep operating forces.

Along with these structural changes, the Soviets experimented with new types of forces modeled closely, in their combined arms mix, after the former mobile groups and forward detachments. Experimental corps of mixed brigade composition reflected Soviet testing of formations suited to conduct operational maneuver.<sup>11</sup> These corps, depending on their mix of tank and motorized rifle brigades, may have been termed tank, mechanized, or combined arms. Experience convinced the Soviets that the composition of such corps groups depended largely on the nature of the enemy, the area of operations, and the combat function which these corps would fulfill.

Within armies and divisions the Soviets fielded reinforced tank regiments and battalions whose structures resembled former wartime tactical maneuver forces (forward detachments). The large separate tank regiment at army level evolved from the former heavy tank/SP gun regiment which was earlier employed both to facilitate penetrations and spearhead exploitations. The separate tank battalion, by virtue of its strength and reinforced composition, resembled the older wartime tank brigades which had served as forward detachments for tank, mechanized and rifle forces.<sup>12</sup>

The Soviets reorganized and reequipped specialized forces as well. Airborne divisions were fully mechanized and restructured with the introduction of the BMD combat vehicle and assault guns. Naval infantry forces were reorganized from regiments into brigades, and the Soviets created a naval infantry division. Both forces have an air assault capability. Throughout the force structure the Soviets streamlined logistics by creating materiel support units at the tactical and operational levels. Most force structure changes sought to create more flexible forces capable of performing the critical functions of tactical and operational maneuver in theater war. These changes took place throughout the 1970s and into the mid- 1980s, driven by Soviet analysis of the changing nature of combat and the contemporary battlefield. Since 1982 Soviet recognition of new realities, some political and economic and some relating to new weaponry, has prompted a new wave of even more fundamental changes.

#### Motives For Change

Careful Soviet analysis of contemporary physical and technological requirements of theater warfare have affected the nature of force structure changes. Soviet analysis of combat in Afghanistan, physical aspects of central European terrain, and the impact of new weaponry have prompted these changes. Re-publication in 1985 of a 1946 speech by General P. A. Rotmistrov to GSFG probably underscored Soviet belief that they face force structuring problems similar to those they faced in

1946--namely to replace the former armor-heavy force with a balanced combined arms force which can cope with warfare in an age of high technology weaponry, on an increasingly urbanized and forested battlefield in central Europe, as well as in other varied regions of the world. Rotmistrov, then chief of armored and mechanized forces in GOFG, analyzed 1st Belorussian Front armored operations during the Berlin operation and concluded that the Soviet force structure was too tank-heavy and that it lacked the combined arms balance necessary to fight successfully in more heavily forested, urbanized, and hilly central Europe.<sup>13</sup>

Republication of Rotmistrov's speech, in all likelihood, signified that the process of force structure reform was well underway. The continuation of this restructuring is likely to reach down to regimental and battalion level as the Soviets provide these units and subunits with a combined arms mix more suited for their increasingly independent role in operations.

Experience has shown that the Soviets believe offensive success has depended, and will continue to depend, on effective conduct of maneuver through use of maneuver [mobile] groups. To be effective these groups must possess combat qualities which distinguish them from the remainder of the force structure. In the past (prior to 1954) armored or mechanized forces played this role because their superior firepower and maneuverability accorded them marked advantage over foot or hoofbound forces. In earlier stages of mechanization and motorization (1955 to 1960), tracked units were used because of their firepower,

superior cross-country mobility, and reduced vulnerability to nuclear effects. More recently (the 1970s) armor-heavy units have performed the role because of their strength and speed.

Today, armor is integrated throughout the force structure, and most units are highly mechanized. In addition, proliferation of sophisticated anti-tank weaponry and other fire support means has forced the Soviets to look for other attributes which can provide necessary unique qualities to operational and tactical maneuver forces. They believe they have found the answer through development of sophisticated, integrated concepts for operational and tactical maneuver; careful tailoring of maneuver forces to improve their survivability and sustainability; development of command and control measures suited to such operations; employment of pre-combat formations which permit units to fight in other than linear formation; exploitation of the time factor in operations by the use of norms and operational and tactical calculations in both routine planning and planning during combat; and, finally, increased reliance on the vertical dimension of maneuver as well as maneuver of conventional fires.

Current sophisticated Soviet maneuver concepts, involving concerted use of multiple tactical and operational maneuver [mobile] groups, exploit the fact that quantity has a quality of its own. Multiple maneuver [mobile] groups operate in tandem, employing techniques specifically designed to pre-empt, unhinge,

or paralyze a defense. The sheer number of these groups contributes to the likelihood of their success.

Extensive Soviet study of past operational and tactical maneuver indicates they must continue to pay close attention to the structure of operational and tactical maneuver [mobile] groups. The necessity for concealing both their intent to employ maneuver and the manner in which they will conduct it, requires that they pay increased attention to combat deception. While it is virtually impossible for the Soviets to conceal their intent to employ maneuver, it is possible, through use of deception to conceal those forces which will conduct it. This the Soviets have done extensively and effectively in the past.

Deception will make it difficult for Westerners to ascertain the exact Soviet force structure, to detect accurately alterations in that structure, and to identify which units will perform precise missions. It is likely the Soviet peacetime force structure does not actually mirror wartime structure (at least in terms of unit designations), and peacetime order of battle almost certainly does not reflect wartime order of battle.<sup>14</sup>

#### General Nature of Changes

What has been written thus far reflects military reality as the Soviets see it. The changes which have occurred accord with that reality. To these purely military considerations of force structuring now must be added new political and economic

considerations. Since early 1987 the Soviets have enunciated a "defensive" military doctrine based on what they call "reasonable sufficiency" in terms of force levels and force composition. Both "defensiveness" and "reasonable sufficiency" are principally political aspects of Soviet military doctrine reflecting a new Soviet military stance suited to new global and domestic political and economic realities. The principal political realities are the slow erosion in the political dominance of the United States in the West and the growth of new power centers in Western Europe, the Far East, and in the Third World. This changing world political order may make diplomacy and appeals to public opinion as potent political tools as the looming presence of stark military force, and much less dangerous for contending parties. Economic crises in both the United States and the Soviet Union also make military force a far less appealing tool of international diplomacy. In a more practical sense the Soviets require that economic assets be shifted from the military to the economic sphere to shore up or rebuild the Soviet economy and fulfill the promises of perestroika.

The new political and economic realities also impel the Soviets to stress efficiency in the military and to emphasize quality over quantity in the future. In this sense the military, political, and economic motives are converging to produce a new Soviet military force structure and military posture. Which motives remain the strongest and what consequences will ensue only time and Soviet actions will reveal.



Several tentative judgments can be made concerning the future Soviet force structure. All are based on the premise that both tactical and operational maneuver [mobile] forces will continue to exist in peacetime and will be used, when required, in wartime. Currently the Soviet wartime force structure appears to consist of fronts containing three-four combined arms and one-two tank armies. Armies consist of a combination of tank and motorized rifle divisions and separate specialized units (figure 1). Tank armies perform the function of operational maneuver at front level, either singly or in pairs. Within the combined arms army, the tank division performs the same function. Separate tank regiments of combined arms armies (the size of former tank corps) and separate tank battalions of motorized rifle divisions (the size of former tank brigades) perform the tactical maneuver function. Designated operational and tactical maneuver forces today probably already secretly carry the designation they have had in the past, that of corps and brigade.<sup>15</sup>

The Soviets may overtly convert front operational maneuver groups into corps configuration (figure 2). In this case tank armies would consist of a combination of tank and mechanized corps, with tank corps tank-heavy and mechanized corps balanced combined arms entities. The corps will include a separate tank or motorized rifle brigade to serve as corps forward detachment, together with carefully tailored support.

## CURRENT SOVIET FORCE STRUCTURE

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>
Front	
3-4 combined arms armies	operational maneuver
1-2 tank armies	
Combined Arms Army	
2-4 motorized rifle divisions	
1-2 tank divisions	operational maneuver
1 separate tank regiment	tactical maneuver
Tank Army	
2-4 tank divisions	
1-2 motorized rifle divisions	
1 separate tank regiment	tactical maneuver
Motorized Rifle Division	
3 motorized rifle regiments	
1 tank regiment	
1 separate tank battalion	tactical maneuver
Tank Division	operational maneuver
3 tank regiments	
1 motorized rifle regiment	

Figure 1. Current Soviet Force Structure

## FUTURE SOVIET FORCE STRUCTURE

### OPTION 1

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>
Front	
2-4 combined arms armies	
1-2 tank armies	operational maneuver
Combined Arms Army	
3-4 motorized rifle divisions	
1 tank or mechanized corps	operational maneuver
1 separate tank brigade	tactical maneuver
Tank Army	operational maneuver
2 tank corps	
1-2 mechanized corps	
1 separate tank brigade	tactical maneuver
Motorized Rifle Division	
3 motorized rifle regiments	
1 tank regiment	
1 separate tank brigade	tactical maneuver
Tank Corps	operational maneuver
3-4 tank brigades	
1 motorized rifle brigade	
Mechanized Corps	operational maneuver
3-4 mechanized brigades	
1-2 tank brigades	

Figure 2. Mixed division and corps structure

Within combined arms armies, tank or mechanized corps will conduct operational maneuver and employ their own tactical maneuver force in the process. Separate tank corps or brigades will serve as army forward detachments. Motorized rifle divisions will employ separate tank or motorized rifle brigades as their forward detachments. The Soviets will continue to employ air assault forces in cooperation with operational and tactical maneuver forces. In some instances, air assault units will perform the maneuver function in their own right.<sup>16</sup> While multiple air assault brigades or a full air assault corps will cooperate with a front or an army OMG, air assault brigades will operate in tandem with either army OMGs or the army forward detachment, and an air assault battalion (heliborne) will cooperate with either the army forward detachments or similar divisional entities. The motorized rifle division will employ an air assault company or battalion to support division forward detachment operations.<sup>17</sup>

The Soviets can conceal operational and tactical maneuver elements within their force structure, address military-technical realities, and satisfy political and economic purposes as well, by converting the entire force structure to corps configuration (figure 3). In this case both combined arms armies and mechanized [tank] armies would consist of a varied mix of tank, mechanized, and motorized rifle corps (former divisions), each of which would consist of a differing mixture of brigades. In addition, the Soviets may re-create formations which they

## FUTURE SOVIET FORCE STRUCTURE

### OPTION 2

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>
Front	
1-3 combined arms armies	
1-2 mechanized armies	operational maneuver
Combined Arms Arm	
2-4 motorized rifle corps or fortified regions	
1 tank or mechanized corps	
Mechanized Army	
1-2 tank corps	
1 mechanized corps	
Tank Corps	
3 tank brigades	
1 mechanized brigade	
1 air assault brigade	
Mechanized Corps	
2 mechanized brigades	
2 tank brigades	
1 air assault brigade	
Motorized Rifle Corps	
3 motorized rifle brigades	
1 mechanized or tank brigade	
Fortified Region	
2-3 fortification brigades	
1-2 motorized rifle or mechanized brigades	

Figure 3. Corps and brigade structure

formerly called fortified regions (ukreplennyi raion).<sup>18</sup> In the past these ostensibly defensive entities operated as economy of force units both on the defense and during offensive operations. Soviet experience indicates that these formations could also be termed defensive regions. If so designated, their subordinate units would likely be called fortified regions. Specific types of these new corps and brigades would perform operational and tactical maneuver functions while the remaining units would fulfill a wide range of general combat tasks. Adoption of a corps structure would not only conceal the operational and tactical maneuver core of the Soviet armed forces, it would also blur distinctions and comparisons between NATO and Soviet forces and accord potential advantage to the Soviets in MBFR discussions. The tailoring involved in creating such a force could permit reduction in overall force strength and in the overall quantity of some weapons systems (most notably, tanks and tube artillery) and create perceptions in the West of a reduced threat, whether or not the threat actually diminishes.

It is possible that the Soviets may choose a third option, that is, to decrease significantly the size and offensive capabilities of their forces (Figure 4). In this case the Soviets would drastically restructure the ground forces to match proposals made in the 7 December 1988 Gorbachev speech and subsequent pronouncements. Consequently, throughout the entire force structure the most offensive elements of the force (armor,

## FUTURE SOVIET FORCE STRUCTURE

### OPTION 3

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>
Front	
2-3 combined arms armies 1-2 mechanized armies	operational maneuver
Combined Arms Army 3-4 motorized rifle divisions (corps) or fortification (defensive) divisions (corps)	
Mechanized Army 1-2 motorized rifle divisions (corps) 2-3 tank (mechanized) divisions (corps)	
Tank (Mechanized) Division (Corps) 2-3 tank regiments (brigades) 1-2 motorized rifle regiments (brigades)	
Motorized Rifle Division (Corps) 4 motorized rifle regiments (brigades)	
Fortification (Defensive) Division (Corps) 3-4 machine gun - artillery regiments (brigades)	

Figure 4. Defensive Divisions/Corps Structure

air assault and assault bridging) would be severely truncated or abolished.

Much of the impetus for the Soviet desire to recreate a corps and brigade structure arises from their belief that flexibility will be essential in future operations and that requisite flexibility can only be realized by means of careful tailoring of self-sufficient force entities at corps and brigade level. This relates also to the Soviets' recent judgement that such flexibility and independence will be necessary at battalion level as well.

At the tactical level the Soviets are already committed to tailoring forces to a greater extent than in the past. In 1986 Colonel General D.A. Dragunsky noted "the revived capabilities of the battalion, and the increased significance of the independent operations of subunits, naturally places great demands on the commander."<sup>19</sup> Dragunsky's work reflects a growing trend among Soviet theorists to argue for greater tailoring of forces at regimental and battalion level, so that these forces can operate more independently and better sustain operations.

The tailoring process is likely to involve reassignment to army level of those forces and weapons not of immediate use to battalions, regiments and divisions (or brigade and corps). Conversely, forces and weapons of immediate use to battalions and regiments, such as antitank, self-propelled artillery, antiaircraft, tactical bridging, engineer assets, some helicopter lift, etc. will be assigned to those subunits and



units in greater quantities. In essence, the Soviets will create battalion tactical groups similar to flexibly tailored groups at brigade and corps level.

The new Soviet force structure, characterized by force tailoring at all levels, will better match the current Soviet claim that "With the enemy using high-precision weapons, the role of the first echelon has to grow. It must be capable of achieving a mission without the second echelon."<sup>20</sup> The Gorbachev 7 December 1988 speech appears to indicate that the Soviets have accelerated the process of force restructuring and that may signal conversion to a full corps and brigade structure. It remains to be seen to what degree and at what speed these force changes will take place. The ultimate form of the new structure will underscore Soviet sincerity regarding the defensiveness of its doctrine.

#### Specific Force Changes

To fully understand the nature and implications of a corps and brigade force structure it is necessary to explain the distinction between the terms corps and brigade and those of division and regiment. It is also useful to review and compare the relative differences between the designations tank, mechanized, and motorized rifle when applied to corps and brigades.

Traditionally the Soviets have used the terms army, division, and regiment to describe multi-purpose line units

expected to perform a variety of routine combat functions such as offense, defense, and retrograde operations. They have used the terms corps and brigade to describe experimental units or units organized and tailored to perform a specific combat function. Rifle, motorized-rifle, tank, mechanized, and airborne divisions and regiments, organized on a command TOE fall into the former category. Units specifically designated to perform operational or tactical maneuver functions or other specialized tasks, such as airborne, tank, mechanized, and air assault units, have carried the designation of corps or brigade (for example air assault and reconnaissance-divisionary brigades, and light rifle and mountain rifle corps and brigades)

Some confusion results when comparing the relative size of functional corps and brigades with line divisions, regiments and battalions. Former Soviet tank and mechanized corps were of division strength with from 168 to 230 tanks and SP guns each. Former tank brigades were either of regimental strength (90-150 tanks) or of reinforced battalion strength (45-70 tanks). Thus, the current separate tank regiments of Soviet armies, with about 150 tanks each, are as strong as small tank corps or large tank brigades. If used as forward detachments the Soviets could use either designation. Current separate tank battalions of motorized rifle divisions are similar in size and structure to the former tank brigades, which were used as forward detachments for a wide range of Soviet formations. The recent experimental Soviet corps, consisting of brigades and often termed "new" or

unified army corps, were smaller than former tank armies but larger than former tank or mechanized corps. In essence, they were test-beds from which future corps of varying composition would evolve. Various derivations of the original test corps were probably designed to perform the function of operational maneuver singly, as operational maneuver groups serving armies, or in combination (2 or 3) within a tank or mechanized army, as the operational maneuver group within fronts.

In light of new political and military realities, the new types of corps will now evolve to satisfy a variety of both defensive and offensive combat functions, including that of operational maneuver. It is likely that some formations in the current Soviet force structure have already been reconfigured as corps and brigades and these are probably the nucleus of the Soviet's operational maneuver force. This reconfiguration process will continue and will likely include some corps configured to perform a distinctly defensive function as well. The following chart reviews Soviet formation and use of maneuver forces:

Organization of Operational Maneuver Forces

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>	<u>ARMY</u>
1936-July 1941	1-2 Mechanized corps or cavalry corps	1 mechanized corps
July 1941-March 1942	-	1 cavalry corps(+)

March 1942-June 1942	-	1-2 tank corps or cavalry corps(+)
June 1942-July 1943	2-4 tank corps or 1 temporary mobile group	1-2 tank or mechanized corps, or cavalry corps(+)
July 1943-August 1945	1-3 tank armies and/or 1 cavalry mechanized group	1 tank or mechanized corps
1946-1958	1-2 mechanized armies	1-2 tank or mechanized divisions
1958-1962	1 tank army	1 tank division
1968	No designated force	No designated force
Present	1-2 tank armies	1 tank division (unified or mechanized corps)
Future	1-2 mechanized (tank) armies	1 mechanized (tank corps)

The terminology tank, mechanized, and motorized rifle reflects a mix of forces based on the relative number of armored units in the force vis-a-vis motorized rifle units. The following chart summarizes the differences:

#### Composition of Mobile Forces

1942 Tank Corps	9 tank battalions 6 motorized battalions
1944 Tank Corps	9 tank battalions 6 motorized rifle battalions
1945 Tank Corps	11 tank battalions 4 motorized rifle battalions

1942 Mechanized Corps	9 mechanized battalions 6 tank battalions
1944 Mechanized Corps	9 mechanized battalions 6 tank battalions
1945 Mechanized Corps	10 motorized rifle battalions 6 tank battalions (plus 3 SP gun regiments [battalion size])
1945 Tank Army (3 corps version)	28 tank battalions 18 motorized rifle battalions
1945 Tank Army (2 corps version)	25 tank battalions 9 motorized rifle battalions
1946 Tank Division	11 tank battalions (plus 4 SP gun battalions) 7 motorized rifle battalions
1968 Tank Division	9 tank battalions 3 motorized rifle battalions
1946 Mechanized Division	11 motorized rifle battalions 7 tank battalions (plus 3 SP gun battalions)
1956 Mechanized Division	9 motorized rifle battalions 8 tank/SP gun battalions (plus 1 SP gun battalion)
1946 Mechanized Army	36 motorized rifle battalions 36 tank battalions (plus 14 SP gun battalions)
1958 Motorized Rifle Division	9 motorized rifle battalions 6 tank battalions
1986 Motorized Rifle Division	9 motorized rifle battalions 6 tank battalions (plus one separate reinforced tank battalion)

As indicated, tank units contained from 60-75 percent tank battalions vis-a-vis motorized rifle battalions. Mechanized units possessed a balanced mix of tank and motorized rifle battalions, while motorized rifle units had a preponderance of motorized rifle battalions.

In their new restructuring program the Soviets can proceed in one of two ways. First, they can restructure to satisfy the many requirements of the future battlefield and maintain an offensive capability while posturing defensively. This would result in creation of a slightly smaller force structure with fewer tanks and tubes of artillery but with a strong maneuver nucleus and considerable firepower and maneuverability. Second, they can restructure primarily on the basis of defensiveness. This more radical approach would create a force whose primary characteristics would be defensive but which would possess only a counterattack capability. The second option, if verifiable, would clearly indicate the seriousness of Soviet pronouncements concerning a defensive doctrine. Within these constraints the following passages relate to the first (offensive) option.

Recent Soviet writings, which have stressed the necessity of creating a mix of combined arms units suited to dealing with any eventuality, indicate that the Soviets may create a variety of corps type formations tailored to perform specific combat functions. These functions would certainly include tactical and operational maneuver as well as other basic defensive and offensive tasks. Experience indicates that these new corps size

formations may be termed tank, mechanized and motorized. All will emphasize a combined arms mix commensurate with the task assigned to the corps. That combined arms mix will extend as well to the brigades and battalions which make up the corps. The Soviets are also likely to create a corps type structure suited by virtue of its name and composition to performing a defensive mission. Past experience indicates that they may name this formation a fortified or defensive region [ukreplenny rayon].<sup>21</sup>

The Soviets are likely to retain their current operational level large units, the army and the front. The mix of forces within an army will be based on the army's function and will, in turn, determine the army's nomenclature. In consonance with the declining relative dominance of armor on the battlefield and the new imperative of creating an adequate combined arms mix, the Soviets are likely to replace tank armies with mechanized armies (as they did in 1946). The new mechanized army will consist of tank and mechanized corps, and will have the principal role of performing operational maneuver, either as a counterattack force on the defense, or as an operational maneuver (mobile) group on the offense. The combined arms army will be made up of motorized rifle corps, mechanized corps, and fortified regions depending on its function, the nature of enemy forces, and the terrain. Armies configured defensively will rely principally on fortified regions to establish large defensive sectors and motorized rifle corps to provide a maneuver capability within the

army. Configured offensively, the combined arms army will consist of fortified regions, motorized rifle corps, and at least one mechanized corps to perform operational maneuver. The fortified region, in this instance, will perform an economy-of-force mission to permit other army forces to concentrate in their principal offensive sector.

The basic building blocks for this newly emerging force structure will be tailored combined arms battalions, which may be termed "battalion tactical groups." These battalion groups will be organized around the nucleus of former tank and motorized rifle battalions, and they will include in their TOE those combined arms elements which formerly were attached to the battalions, plus any other elements which will contribute to a better combined arms balance within the battalion.<sup>22</sup> A third type of battalion group will emphasize heavy, relatively static antitank and artillery firepower supplemented by a significant engineer obstacle-laying capability.<sup>23</sup> The latter, called a heavy weapons battalion, will provide the building blocks for engineer-fortifications brigades and their parent fortified regions, while the tank and motorized rifle battalion tactical groups will provide the basis for the tank, mechanized, and motorized brigades of tank, mechanized, and motorized rifle corps. Battalion tactical groups will likely be organized as follows:



### Battalion Tactical Groups

#### Tank Battalion

3 tank companies (10 tanks each)

1 motorized rifle company (BMP)

1-2 SP artillery batteries (8-122-mm)

1 mortar battery (8-120-mm)

1 AT battery (ATGM, guns)

1 reconnaissance platoon

1 SAM platoon (9-SA14)

1 assault-bridge platoon

1 engineer-sapper platoon

1 signal platoon

1 materiel support company

1 medical section

#### Motorized Rifle Battalion

3 motorized rifle companies

1 tank company (10 tanks)

1-2 SP artillery batteries (8-122-mm)

1 mortar battery (8-120-mm)

1 AT battery (ATGM, guns)

1 reconnaissance platoon

1 SAM platoon (9-SA14)

1 assault-bridge platoon

1 engineer-sapper platoon

1 signal platoon

1 materiel support company

1 medical section

Strength: 31 tanks

Strength: 10 tanks

### Heavy Weapons Battalion

- 3 heavy weapons companies
- 1 artillery battery
- 1 mortar battery
- 1 AT battery
- 1 reconnaissance platoon
- 1 SAM platoon
- 1 engineer-sapper platoon
- 1 signal platoon
- 1 materiel support company
- 1 medical section
- 1 tank company (optional)

Tank battalion tactical groups, depending on their parent unit, will perform the function of infantry support or will conduct tactical maneuver in their own right, or tactical and operational maneuver as part of a larger unit or formation. Motorized rifle battalion tactical groups will perform a wide range of offensive or defensive tasks depending upon the function of their parent unit and formation. The heavy weapons battalion group will perform primarily a defensive function within fortifications brigades, although it can also take part in offensive operations as an economy of force sub-unit, by occupying large sectors of the front while other forces concentrate their resources in key penetration sectors.

Tailored brigades, consisting of a varied mixture of battalion groups, will form the basis for the new Soviet corps.<sup>24</sup> By virtue of their composition these brigades will likely be named tank, mechanized (or combined arms), motorized rifle, or fortification. They may be organized as follows:

### Brigade Configurations

<u>Tank Brigade</u>	<u>Mechanized Brigade</u>
3 tank battalions (31 tanks each)	2 motorized rifle battalions (10 tanks each)
1 motorized rifle battalion (BMP, 10 tanks)	2 tank battalions (31 tanks each)
1 SP artillery battalion (24-122-mm or 152-mm)	1 SP artillery battalion (24-122-mm or 152-mm)
1 SAM battery (4-SPAAG, 4-SA13)	1 SAM battery (4-SPAAG, 4-SA13)
1 AT battery (or battalion) (ATGM, guns)	1 AT battery (or battalion) (ATGM, guns)
1 air assault company	1 air assault company
1 assault crossing company	1 assault crossing company
1 reconnaissance company	1 reconnaissance company
1 engineer-sapper company	1 engineer-sapper company
1 signal company	1 signal company
1 chemical defense company	1 chemical defense company
1 materiel support company	1 materiel support company
 <u>Strength:</u> 104 tanks	 <u>Strength:</u> 82 tanks

Motorized Rifle Brigade

3 motorized rifle battalions  
(10 tanks each)

1 tank battalion (31 tanks)

1 artillery battalion  
(24-122-mm or 152-mm)

1 SAM battery (4-SPAAG, 4-  
SA13)

1 AT battery (or battalion)  
(ATGM, guns)

1 reconnaissance company

1 assault crossing company  
(optional)

1 engineer-sapper company

1 chemical defense company

1 materiel support battalion

Strength: 61 tanks

Fortification Brigade

3 heavy weapons battalions

1-2 artillery-mortar  
battalions

1-2 AT battalions

1 SAM battery

1 reconnaissance company

1 engineer-sapper battalion

1 signal company

1 chemical defense company

1 materiel support company

Strength: 31 tanks

The new Soviet corps will be structured to perform all of the basic combat functions. The capabilities of each type corps will be optimized to permit it to carry out its specific function. The tank corps and mechanized corps will be the premier operational maneuver force, operating singly under combined arms army control or collectively within the structure of a mechanized army.<sup>25</sup> On the offense these corps will form operational maneuver (mobile) groups, and on the defense they will add depth and strength to the defensive operational formation and will be the principal counterattack force available to combined arms army and front commanders. The more lightly armored motorized rifle corps will serve combined arms army commanders.<sup>26</sup> Their balanced combined arms mix will enable them to conduct flexible defensive operations or, in conjunction with the heavier tank and mechanized corps, offensive operations. The fortified region will be configured to conduct vigorous defensive operations across a broad front. Its heavy armament and large engineer complement compensates for its reduced manpower strength and permits it to establish tactical defenses in depth across a relatively broad front. It is designed to cause heavy attrition in attacking enemy formations and condition them for the counterattack by tank and mechanized corps. The new corps may be organized as follows:

### Corps Configurations

#### Tank Corps

3 tank brigades (104 tanks each)  
1 mechanized brigade (82 tanks)  
1 air assault battalion  
1 artillery brigade  
1 SAM brigade  
1 assault crossing battalion  
1 reconnaissance battalion  
1 engineer-sapper battalion  
1 chemical defense battalion  
1 materiel support brigade  
2-3 aviation squadrons

Strength: 395 tanks

#### Mechanized Corps

2 tank brigades (104 tanks each)  
2 mechanized brigades (82 tanks each)  
1 air assault battalion  
1 artillery brigade  
1 SAM brigade  
1 assault crossing battalion  
1 reconnaissance battalion  
1 engineer-sapper battalion  
1 chemical defense battalion  
1 materiel support brigade  
2-3 aviation squadrons

Strength: 372 tanks

Motorized Rifle Corps

3 motorized rifle brigades  
(62 tanks each)

1 mechanized or tank brigade  
(82-104 tanks)

1 artillery brigade

1 SAM brigade

1 assault crossing battalion

1 reconnaissance battalion

1 engineer-sapper battalion

1 chemical defense battalion

1 materiel support brigade

1 aviation squadron

Strength: 269-290 tanks

Fortified Region (Corps)

2-3 fortification brigades  
(31 tanks each)

1-2 motorized rifle or  
mechanized brigades  
(62-82 tanks)

1 artillery brigade

1 SAM brigade

1 reconnaissance battalion

1 engineer-sapper brigade

1 chemical defense battalion

1 materiel support brigade

Strength: 155-226 tanks



The new Soviet combined arms army will consist of those type corps required to perform its mission. Normally it will include a nucleus of motorized rifle corps and fortified regions to perform defensive missions and, on occasion, a tank or mechanized corps to cooperate with the motorized rifle corps in performing offensive missions. The mechanized army will consist of tank and mechanized corps.<sup>27</sup> Armies will be tailored in their make-up to suit specific operating conditions. Type armies may be organized as follows:

#### Army Configuration

<u>Combined Arms Army</u>	<u>Mechanized Army</u>
2-4 motorized rifle corps or fortified regions	1-2 tank corps
1 tank or mechanized corps (optional)	1 mechanized corps
1 air assault corps (wartime)	1 air assault corps (wartime)
support elements	support elements
 <u>Strength:</u> 465-870 tanks	 <u>Strength:</u> 767-1162 tanks

Soviet wartime fronts will consist of from three to five armies. The normal balance of forces will consist of one to three combined arms armies and one to two mechanized armies with tailored supporting arms.

While possessing some visible defensive features, this force structure meets the need of contemporary combat and, though smaller than the former Soviet force structure, it retains significant offensive capabilities.

A more purely defensive Soviet force structure may evolve in consonance with the Gorbachev 7 December speech and subsequent pronouncements. Specifically, this structure would involve more drastic reductions in the numbers of tanks and tube artillery pieces in all forces and the removal from these forces of uniquely offensive elements such as air assault forces and tactical assault bridging means. Conversely, such a structure would have an expanded antitank, antiaircraft and engineer capability. This new structure could, but would not necessarily, involve the replacement of regiments and divisions with brigades and corps. It would probably involve creation of three basic types of units at each command level: fortification, motorized rifle, and mechanized or tank.

Such a structure would consist of the following:

Battalions

<u>Machine Gun/Heavy Weapons</u>	<u>Motorized Rifle</u>	<u>Tank (Mechanized)</u>
3-5 heavy weapons companies	3-4 motorized rifle companies 1 tank company (10 tanks)	2-3 tank companies (10 tanks each) 1-2 motorized rifle company
<u>Strength:</u> no tanks	<u>Strength:</u> 10 tanks	<u>Strength:</u> 20-30 tanks

Regiments/Brigades

<u>Machine Gun/Artillery</u>	<u>Motorized Rifle</u>	<u>Tank (Mechanized)</u>
2-3 MG/HW battalions 2-3 artillery battalions 1 tank company (10 tanks)	4 motorized rifle battalions (10 tanks each)	3 tank battalions (20-30 tanks each) 1 motorized rifle battalion (10 tanks)
<u>Strength:</u> 10 tanks	<u>Strength:</u> 40 tanks	<u>Strength:</u> 70-100 tanks

Divisions/Corps

<u>Fortifications (Defensive)</u>	<u>Motorized Rifle</u>	<u>Tank (Mechanized)</u>
4 MG/artillery regiments (Bdes) (10 tanks each)	4 motorized rifle regiments (Bdes) (40 tanks each)	2-3 tank regiments (Bdes) (70-100 tanks each) 1-2 motorized rifle regiments (Bdes) (40 tanks each)
<u>Strength:</u> 40 tanks	<u>Strength:</u> 160 tanks	<u>Strength:</u> 250-280 tanks

## Armies

### Combined Arms

3-4 motorized rifle divisions  
(corps) or  
fortification (defensive)  
divisions (corps)

### Mechanized

1-2 motorized rifle divisions  
(corps)  
2-3 tank (mechanized)  
divisions (corps)

## Fronts

2-3 combined arms armies  
1-2 mechanized armies

This structure, by virtue of its weakened armored compliment and its lack of offensive support forces, would be more indicative of a real defensive doctrine.

There are other possible variations the Soviets could adopt in their force restructuring program. For example, they could reduce the number of type corps by creating only two types, such as tank and mechanized, tank and motorized rifle, or mechanized and motorized rifle corps. Likewise, they could create a second type motorized rifle corps with heavier weaponry in place of the fortified region. An even more radical restructuring could involve the abolition of the army level of command and the direct subordination of multiple corps to fronts. In wartime however, the army level of command is likely to re-emerge.

## Configuration of the Groups of Forces

Major changes in Soviet force structure will be reflected in the organization of the Soviet groups of forces in Central and

Eastern Europe, both in peacetime and in wartime. Traditionally, Soviet peacetime force organization has differed significantly from the organization of Soviet forces when they have gone to war. This reflects traditional and routine Soviet practice of deception. The Soviets have employed deception extensively prior to conducting offensive and defensive operations in the past.<sup>28</sup> A major facet of deception has been the creation of false groupings of forces, the masking of actual force composition, and the concealed regrouping of strategic reserves and other forces. This applied to the Red Army in 1941 and to the Red Army in over one-hundred front and multi-front operations during the Second World War. It has likely applied to GSFG, and its predecessor, GOFG, as well. Organizational changes within GSFG over the past forty years, the routine imbalance of different types of divisions and forces within armies, and the apparent mal-deployment of peacetime army formations strongly indicate the possibility of a peacetime structure which masks actual wartime structure. For example, divisions formerly in 3d and 4th Guards Mechanized armies, which existed from 1946 to 1956, are now found in 3d Shock Army, 20th Guards Army, and the Northern Group of Forces. GOFG itself originally consisted of the "Berlin" armies (those which liberated Berlin). These were 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th Guards Tank Armies, 3d and 5th Shock Armies, and 8th Guards Army.<sup>29</sup> In 1947 5th Shock Army was demobilized and 3d and 4th Guards Mechanized (Tank) Armies became cadre armies of four divisions each.<sup>30</sup>

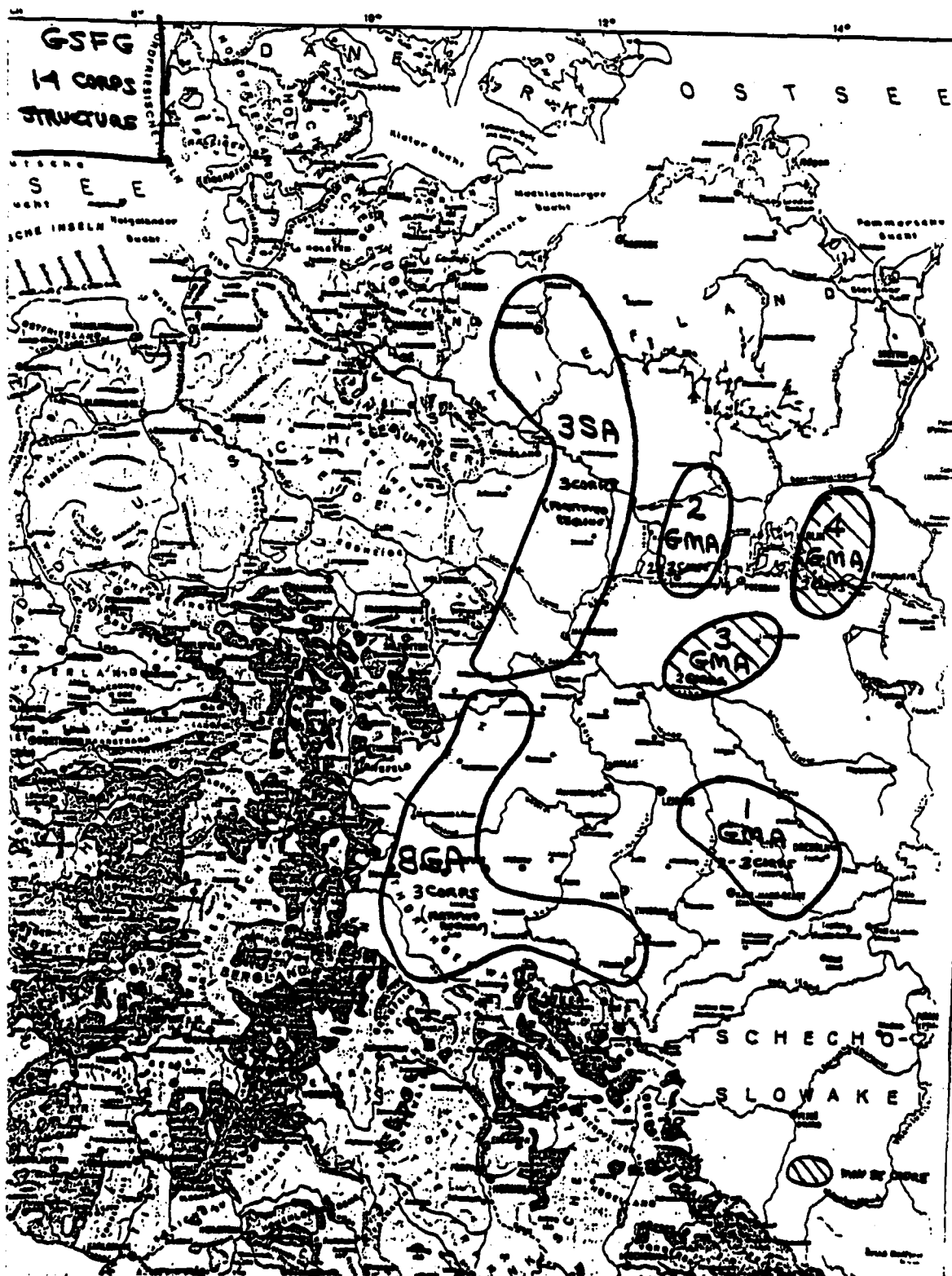
After 1949, 3d and 4th Guards Mechanized Armies were brought to full strength only to be renamed 20th and 18th Guards Armies after 1958.<sup>31</sup> Neither of these two guards armies had earned its honorifics during wartime (the highest numbered guards army was the 11th). 18th Guards Army disappeared from the Soviet order of battle in the early 1960s, and 3d Shock Army absorbed its remnants.

3d Shock Army emerged as an unbalanced force of four tank divisions and one motorized rifle division, whereas in the past, it, and other shock armies, by definition, had been heavy combined arms armies. It is likely that 3d Shock Army, 20th Guards Army, and the two divisions of NGF formed the nucleus of wartime 3d Shock and 3d and 4th Guards Tank Armies. This would have provided GSFG with the capability of generating two wartime fronts, each consisting of one Soviet combined arms army and two Soviet tank armies. Each of these fronts could have been augmented by selective reinforcements and one East German army.

Recognizing that deception will likely be a factor, several variations are possible in the future organization of the Soviet groups of forces in Europe. In all of the variants considered GSFG will consist of two combined arms armies and from two to four mechanized armies, CGF will consist of one combined arms army and one mechanized army, and SGF will consist of one combined arms army. NGF forces will either form one mechanized army or be absorbed in GSFG's wartime structure. The variants

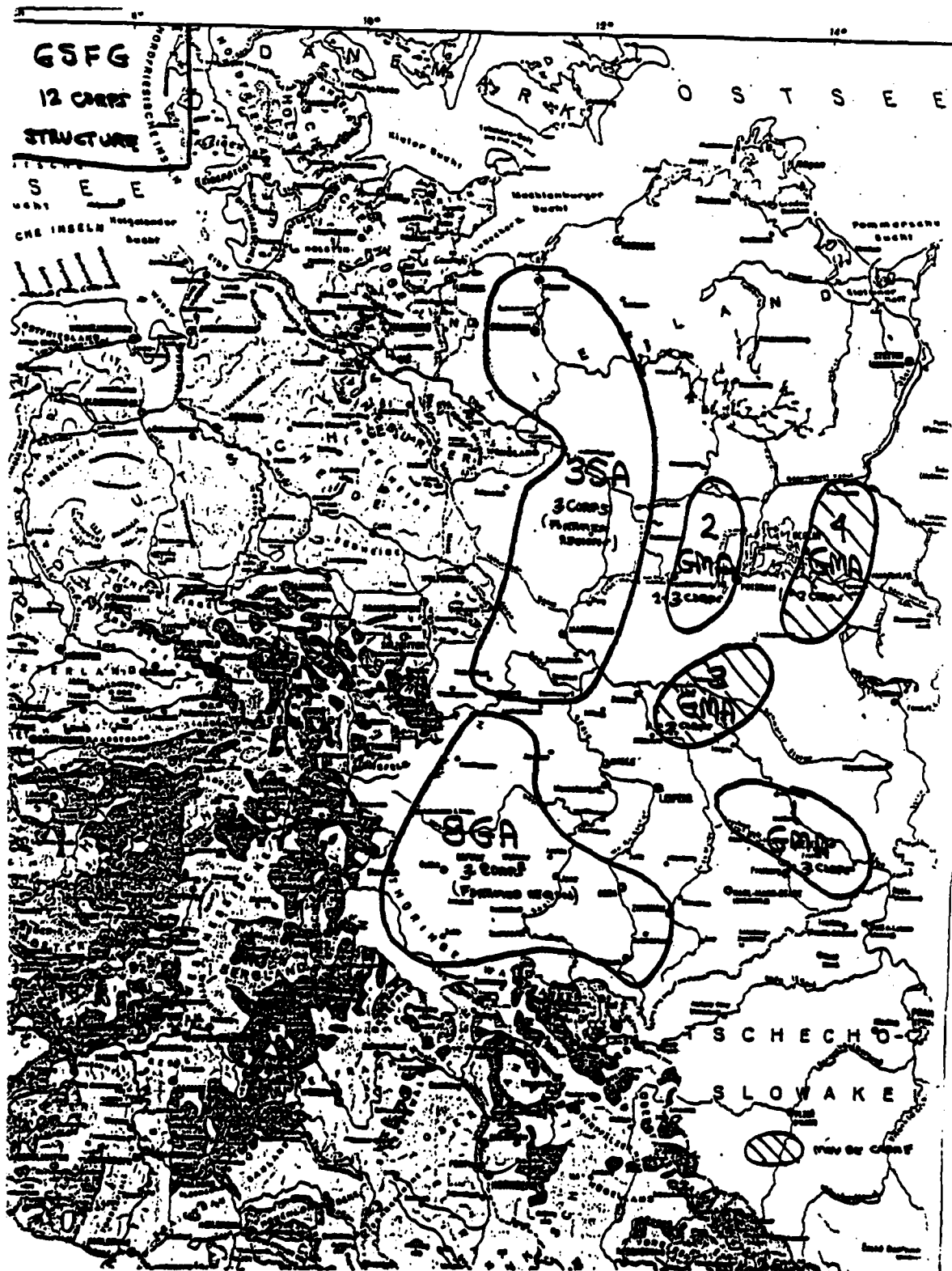
which follow presume the hypothetical creation of a fourteen corps and twelve corps structure within GSFG (maps 1 and 2).

For the purposes of deception the Soviets may reorganize their forces and in so doing use only the generic nomenclature of combined arms corps, while in reality tailoring specific corps to suit specific combat requirements. This underscores the importance of verification in any future arms control agreements.



Map 1. GSFG: fourteen corps structure





Map 2. GSFG: twelve corps structure

Soviet Groups of Forces Order of Battle

Variant 1

GSFG

3d Shock Army  
3 motorized rifle corps

8th Guards Army  
3 motorized rifle corps

1st Guards Mechanized Army  
1 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

2d Guards Mechanized Army  
1 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

3d Guards Mechanized Army  
1 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

4th Guards Mechanized Army  
1 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

CGF

Combined Arms Army  
2 motorized rifle corps  
1 tank or mechanized corps

7th Guards Mechanized Army  
1 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

Variant 2

GSFG

3d Shock Army  
3 fortified regions

8th Guards Army  
3 fortified regions

1st Guards Mechanized Army  
2 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

2d Guards Mechanized Army  
2 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

CGF

Combined Arms Army  
3 fortified regions

7th Guards Mechanized Army  
1 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

SGF

Combined Arms Army  
2 motorized rifle corps  
1 mechanized corps

NGF

Mechanized Army  
1-2 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

Tank strength:

GSFG: 4,682-4,808

CGF: 1,677-1,742

SGF: 910-952

NGF: 767-1,162

Total: 8.036-8,664

SGF

Combined Arms Army  
2 motorized rifle corps  
1 tank corps

NGF

Mechanized Army  
1-2 tank corps  
0-1 mechanized corps

Tank strength:

GSFG: 3,254-3,680

CGF: 1,232-1,445

SGF: 975

NGF: 767-790

Total: 6,329-6,890

Soviet Groups of Forces Order of Battle

Variant 3

GSFG (plus NGF)

3d Shock Army  
2 fortified regions  
1 motorized rifle corps

8th Guards Army  
2 fortified regions  
1 motorized rifle corps

1st Guards Mechanized Army  
2 tank corps  
2 mechanized corps

2d Guards Mechanized Army  
2 tank corps  
2 mechanized corps

Variant 4

GSFG (plus NGF)

3d Shock Army  
2 fortified regions  
1 motorized rifle corps

8th Guards Army  
2 fortified regions  
1 motorized rifle corps

1st Guards Mechanized Army  
2 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

2d Guards Mechanized Army  
2 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

3d Guards Mechanized Army  
1 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

4th Guards Mechanized Army  
1 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

Variant 3

CGF

Combined Arms Army  
2 fortified regions  
1 mechanized corps

7th Guards Mechanized Army  
1 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

SGF

Combined Arms Army  
2 Motorized rifle corps  
1 tank corps

Tank strength:

GSFG: 4,226-4,552

CGF: 1,449-1,591

SGF: 975

Total: 6,650-7,118

Variant 4

CGF

Combined Arms Army  
1 fortified region  
1 mechanized corps  
1 tank corps

7th Guards Mechanized Army  
1 tank corps  
1 mechanized corps

SGF

Combined Arms Army  
1 motorized rifle corps  
1 mechanized corps  
1 tank corps

Tank strength:

GSFG: 5,806-6,132

CGF: 1,689-1,760

SGF: 1,036-1,057

Total: 8,531-8,949

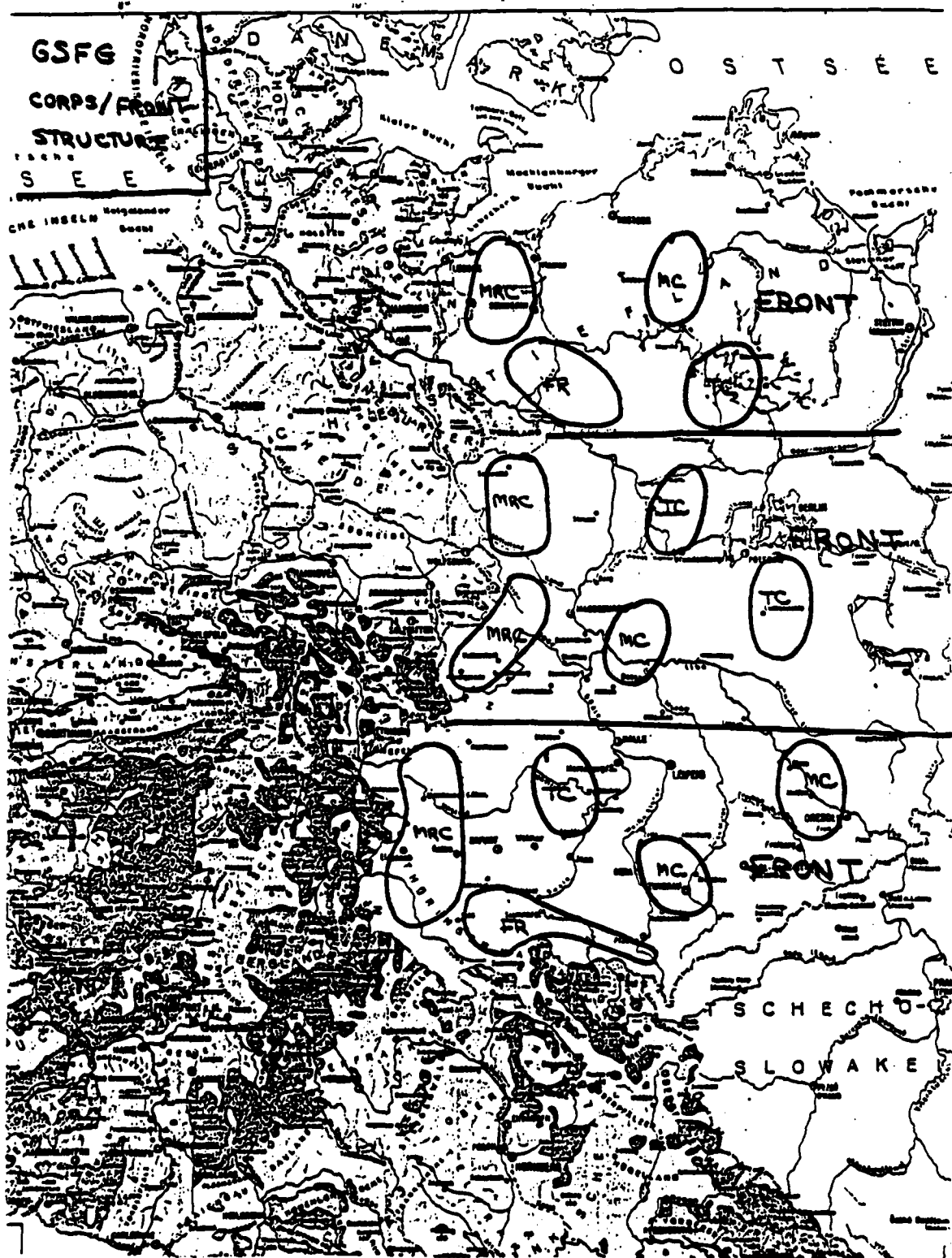
If the Soviets were to subordinate corps directly to front control, GSFG would likely consist of three fronts, each consisting of four corps (map 3). Each front could contain two motorized rifle corps or fortified regions deployed forward, which would be backed up by an operational maneuver force of two tank or mechanized corps. Two corps would provide the GSFG reserve.

### Conclusion

Today the Soviets are confronted by changing conditions which impel them to alter their force structure. Purely military considerations, in particular the accelerating pace of technological change and the evolving battlefield environment, necessitate fundamental changes. For a decade the Soviets have gradually adjusted their force structure to accommodate these new realities, but today the existing force structure has evolved as far as it can. Clearly, new forms of forces are required which will permit further accommodation. The more flexible corps, brigade, and battalion structure can provide the vehicle for further change.

The "new" defensiveness in Soviet military doctrine provides yet another motive for force structure changes. The current structure is inexorably linked with the former more offensive posture. The enunciation of new defensive precepts requires the creation of a less offensive looking force structure (or at least a force structure which Western observers are unfamiliar with). Although the Soviets have long-standing

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Map 3. GSFG: corps/front structure

experience with the employment of corps and brigades, most Westerners are ignorant of it. The key issue in the future will be what form this new force structure will take and what its capabilities will be. (KR)

#### ENDNOTES

1. S. A. Tyushkevich, ed., Sovetskiye vooruzhennyye sily [The Soviet armed forces], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1978) 393; A. Dunin, "Razvitiye sukhoputnykh voysk v poslevoyennyy period" [The development of ground forces in the postwar period], Voyenno-istoricheskii Zhurnal, No. 5 (May 1978), 34-35. Hereafter cited as VIZh.
2. "Osnovy obshchevoyskovogo boya (Lektsiya)" [Principles of combined arms battle (a lesson)], Vystrel' [Vystrel' advanced infantry course], translated by Directorate of Military Intelligence, Army Headquarters, Ottawa, Canada, 1954.
3. Military Summary of USSR and Satellites, Number 2, December 1948 (Secret) (Washington, D.C.: Intelligence Division, GSUSA) declassified 30 July 1985.
4. Marshals G. K. Zhukov and R. Ya. Malinovsky were defense ministers during these reforms. See Dunin, 38. At this point Soviet description of their force structure shifts into use of generic terms and comparisons between old and new units on the basis of percentage changes in strength and firepower. More detail is available in "Recent Changes in Soviet Divisional Organization," Intelligence Review, No. 222 (August-September 1955), 10-14; "Organizational Employment of Soviet Line Divisions," Intelligence Review, No. 254 (July 1962), 9-12.
5. N. Kireyev, "Primeneniye tankovykh podrazdeleniy i chastey pri proryve oborony protivnika" [The use of tank subunits and units during the penetration of an enemy defense], VIZh, No. 2 (February 1982), 37; "Soviet Tactics: Medium Tank Regiment," Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 30-77, (Washington, D. C.: Headquarters, Dept of the Army, November 1960), 2; V. A. Semenov, Kratkiy ocherk razvitiya Sovetskogo operativnogo iskusstva [A short survey of the development of Soviet military art], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1960), 290-291.
6. V. D. Sokolovsky, Voennaya strategiya [Military strategy], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1963), 383.
7. Dunin, 38-39; "Soviet Field Armies: Organizational and Operational Concepts," Intelligence Research Project, No. P3-10,



(Washington, D. C.: OACSI, 1962), declassified. Average size wartime fronts would consist of a mixture of combined arms and tank armies: the combined arms army of three or four motorized rifle divisions and one tank division and the tank army of two to four medium tank divisions; possibly one heavy tank division; and under special circumstances, a motorized rifle division.

8. Among the articles on anti-nuclear maneuver were F. Sverdlov, "K voprosu o manevre v boyu" [Concerning the question of maneuver in combat], Voenny Vestnik, No. 8 (August 1972), 31; V. Savkin, "Manevr v boyu" [Maneuver in battle], Voenny Vestnik, No. 4 (April 1972), 23. Hereafter cited as VV. For a more contemporary expression of this view see V. G. Reznichenko, Taktika [Tactics], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1987), 72.

9. Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 100-2-3, "Soviet Army Troops Organization and Equipment," July 1984, 4-48.

10. V. E. Savkin, Osnovnyye printsipy operativnogo iskusstva i taktiki [Basic principles of operational art and tactics], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1972), 228. Translated by US Air Force.

11. "The Soviet Army: Troops, Organization and Equipment" FM 100-2-3, Washington, D.C.: Headquarters Department of the Army, 1989), 4-113.1 - 4-113.5 (Draft).

12. Wartime tank brigades were tailored in a variety of ways including the following variants:

Variant 1 (unreinforced)      Variant 2 (reinforced)      Variant 3 (reinforced)

3 tank battalions	tank brigade	tank brigade
1 motorized rifle battalion	motorized rifle regiment	SP gun regiment
1 anti-aircraft artillery battalion	artillery regiment	rifle battalion
1 anti-tank company	SP gun battalion	anti-tank battery
1 anti-aircraft machine gun company	anti-aircraft regiment	sapper company
1 technical support company	guards motor battalion	
1 medical platoon	sapper company	
	mortar battalion	

Strength: 65 tanks

Strength: 65 tanks  
20 SP guns

Strength: 65 tanks  
21 SP guns

13. "Iz doklada komanduyushchego bronetankovymi i mekhanizirovannymi voyskami Gruppy sovetskikh voysk v Germanii marshala bronetankovykh voysk P. A. Rotmistrova na voyenno-nauchnoy konferentsii po izucheniyu Berlinskoy operatsii" [From the report of the commander of armored and mechanized forces of

the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, Marshal of Armored Forces, P. A. Rotmistrov, at a military-scientific conference on the study of the Berlin operation, VIZh, No. 9 (September 1985), 43-50. Support units added to Soviet armies and divisions have had the same effect as those added to Soviet units in 1946-47. They have improved the combined arms balance of the entire force. In addition to republishing Rotmistrov's report, the Soviets have published an increased number of articles dealing with operations in difficult terrain. While some of these reflect Soviet concern with warfare in Afghanistan, they also clearly pertain to operations in central Europe. These articles include six on the subject since May 1980 in Voyenno-istoricheskiy Zhurnal [Military historical journal] and many in lower level journals.

14. The Soviets have been masters at concealing actual combat organization of their forces, both during wartime and before the outbreak of war. They did this well against the Germans in June 1941 (although almost for naught) and again in August 1945 against the Japanese. During wartime, although German intelligence maintained a fairly complete Order of Battle for Soviet forces, they were repeatedly deceived regarding specific locations of major units and the organization of forces facing them in critical sectors. See David M. Glantz, Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War [London: Frank Cass, 1989]. For example, given the irrational composition of Soviet armies in GSFG, the dysfunctional location of subordinate units, and Soviet past practice, it is virtually certain that wartime organization will differ from peacetime organization.

15. The appearance of new corps-type entities is consistent with the manner in which the Soviets have experimented with and formed new units in the past; in particular the way the Soviets developed operational maneuver forces during the war years. The appearance of brigade-type structures within motorized rifle divisions in forces deployed within the NATO Forward Area suggests Soviet experimentation with, and perhaps fielding of, tactical maneuver brigades designated to operate within divisions. These brigades also have direct antecedents during the war years.

16. Recent Soviet articles talk of air assault units performing as forward detachments in their own right. See, R. Salikhov, "V peredovom otryad" [In a forward detachment], VV, No. 3 (March 1987), 33-36.

17. See, J. F. Holcomb, Jr.; G. H. Turbiville, Jr., "Exploiting the Vertical Dimension: Continuing Development of the Soviet Desant Force Structure," (Ft Leavenworth, KS: Soviet Army Studies Office, 1987), 22-27.

18. "Ukreplennyi rayon" [Fortified region], Sovetskaya voennaya entsiklopediya T.S. [Soviet Military Encyclopedia, Vol 8]

(Moscow: Voenizdat, 1980), 185. Hereafter cited as SVE with appropriate date, volume, and page.

19. D. A. Dragunsky, Motostrelkovyy (tankovyy) batal'on v boyu, [The motorized rifle [tank] battalion in battle] (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1986), 9.

20. Yu. Molostov, A. Novikov, "High-precision weapons against tanks," Soviet Military Review, No. 1 (January 1988), 13.

21. The Soviets have also used the term "Defensive Region" to describe large area defenses, normally around population centers. See "Oboronitel'nyy rayon" [Defensive region], SVE, 1978, 5:666-667.

22. For examples of tailored battalion groups see the following selections in VV:

No. 8 (Aug 1982), 28; No. 3 (Mar 1983), 36:37; No. 10 (Oct 1983), 31;  
No. 1 (Jan 1984), 33; No. 10 (Oct 1984), 32; No. 1 (Jan 1985), 32;  
No. 6 (Jun 1985), 36; No. 8 (Aug 1985), 24; No. 5 (May 1986), 24;  
No. 7 (Jul 1986), 32; No. 1 (Jan 1987), 44; No. 2 (Feb 1987), 28;  
No. 3 (Mar 1987), 32; No. 4 (Apr 1987), 30:31;

23. The composition of this type of force is less clear. It would probably replicate the type forces contained in a fortified region which consisted of 6-8 machine guns/artillery battalions and support subunits. The machine gun/artillery battalion consisted of 4 machine guns/artillery companies equipped with mortars, anti-tank guns and heavy machine guns, an artillery detachment with 12-76-mm guns, and sapper, medical, and ammunition sections. The fortified region numbered almost 5000 men and the battalion 669 men. Both were heavy in firepower, but light in manpower.

24. Former Soviet mobile brigades were organized as follows:

1941 Tank Brigade

2 tank battalions  
1 motorized rifle battalion  
1 reconnaissance company  
1 transportation company  
1 repair/reconstruction company  
1 medical platoon

Strength: 46 tanks

1945 Motorized Rifle Brigade

3 motorized rifle battalions  
1 artillery battalion  
1 mortar battalion

1943 Tank Brigade

3 tank battalions  
1 motorized rifle battalion  
1 anti-aircraft company  
1 anti-tank company  
1 repair/reconstruction company  
1 medical platoon

Strength: 65 tanks

1945 Mechanized Brigade

3 mechanized regiments  
1 tank regiment  
support units

1 anti-aircraft battalion  
supply and service subunits

Strength: 39 tanks

25. Former Soviet mobile corps were organized as follows:

1945 Tank Corps

3 tank brigades  
1 motorized rifle brigade  
1 mortar regiment  
1 anti-aircraft regiment  
1 light SP gun regiment  
1 medium SP gun regiment  
1 light artillery regiment  
1 heavy tank regiment  
1 guards mortar regiment  
1 motorcycle battalion  
1 transport company  
2 repair/reconstruction company  
1 medical battalion  
1 chemical defense company  
1 aviation company  
1 sapper battalion  
1 signal battalion

Strength: 228 tanks  
42 SP guns

1945 Mechanized Corps

3 mechanized brigades  
1 tank brigade  
1 light SP gun regiment  
1 medium SP gun regiment  
1 heavy SP gun regiment  
1 mortar regiment  
1 anti-aircraft regiment  
1 guards mortar battalion  
1 motorcycle battalion  
1 signal battalion  
1 sapper/engineer battalion  
1 medical battalion  
1 transport company  
1 repair/reconstruction company

Strength: 183 tanks  
63 SP guns

26. Soviet rifle corps during wartime were organized as multi-functional line units. On an average they consisted of three rifle divisions, an artillery regiment, and signal and engineer battalions. Other support was provided by army

27. The Soviet wartime tank army consisted of either two tank corps, or two tank corps and one mechanized corps. By war's end tank armies fielded up to 1000 tanks and SP guns.

28. See David M. Glantz, Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War, (London: Frank Cass, 1989).

29. "The Soviet Occupation Policies in Germany" Intelligence Review No. 84, 25 September 1947 (Secret) (Washington, D.C.: Intelligence Division, USAGS), 35, Declassified 30 July 1985.

30. Military Summary of USSR and Satellites, Number 1, October 1948 (Secret) (Washington, D.C.: Intelligence Division, GSUSA), declassified 30 July 1985.

31. Military Summary: Foreign Ground Forces, Number 3, September 1949 (Secret) (Washington, D.C.: Intelligence Division, GSUSA), declassified 30 July 1985; "Soviet Army

Ammunition Supply System in East Germany" Intelligence Review No. 252, January 1982 (Secret) (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, OAC of S for Intel), 12. Declassified 30 July 1985.